



"Building Our Future Together"

Project development packet
for
community renewal projects

Blue Mountain Community Renewal Council, Inc.

Council Purpose

The Blue Mountain Community Renewal Council, Inc. (BMCRC) was established for charitable and educational purposes to facilitate, advise and support community projects which assist in providing and sustaining a high degree of health, well-being, economic security and environmental integrity in the community comprised of the towns of Glencoe, Rail Road Flat, West Point and Wilseyville including, but not limited to, results such as:

- ☞ Facilitate and guide BMCRC project organizations in obtaining grant funding and/or other financial support;
- ☞ Monitor active BMCRC-sponsored projects' status, and assist where needed to break down barriers to success;
- ☞ Provide resources to project organizations, including, but not limited to, strategic planning, management expertise, political advocacy, advertising and promotion, technical expertise, statistical data, and other assistance or information needed by each BMCRC-sponsored project;
- ☞ Continually update the catalog of pending projects; and,
- ☞ As projects are completed, help prioritize pending projects, obtain consensus to initiate new projects and assist in establishing new project organizations.

Council Vision

Adopted from the May, 1999 community workshop

“Our vision is to work cooperatively to improve our communities. Our needs for employment, education, recreation and basic services must be met in light of the things we value, those things that brought and keep us here. In our decisions, we want to demonstrate our respect for people of all ages: children, youth, adults and older adults. We want to ...

“Improve our ability to provide for our families economically by developing existing businesses and creating new businesses where needed. In keeping with the rural nature of our area, we seek to encourage a variety of small businesses that meet the needs of the residents. We want to emphasize sustainable community renewal for long-term prosperity.

“Develop attractive, thriving town centers with a variety of businesses and services. Reliable transit of town centers, as well as safe access for pedestrians and non-motorized modes of travel are desirable.

“Assure the health of our residents through access to health care.

“Strengthen the sense of a unified community that increases the well-being, safety and security of our residents.

“Enhance our ability to grow through a variety of educational opportunities.

“Present a strong unified voice in communicating with the county government.

“We seek governmental recognition of the development needs of our businesses and assistance with obtaining variances in regulations.

“Encourage an active cultural environment that includes art, music and theater that enriches the lives of area residents.

“Provide residents with the opportunity to utilize their skills and talents through employment, volunteerism, and mentoring or apprenticeship programs.

“Promote celebration and appreciation of our local history: gold, timber, Indian and ethnic diversity of the area. We seek to preserve our historical buildings and sites.

“Support good air quality and watershed management; clean, free-flowing rivers, healthy forests, clean air and preservation of wild areas.

“Develop recreational areas for all residents with opportunities for family recreation, and safe areas for children's and youth activities.”

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BMCRC's Community Renewal Strategy

The primary strategy for implementing BMCRC efforts is to work through inclusive, resident-based volunteer project teams. This strategy is intended to enhance sustainability by embedding projects' design, decisions and development pacing into an inclusive community-based approach. It is anticipated that resident interest and involvement will establish outcome priorities, and the pace of project development and implementation.

BMCRC will provide technical consulting or project staff as needed, when available. As appropriate to the specific project, community-based project teams will work as partners with important external entities, such as county, state and federal government agencies, private-sector companies, foundations and/or other non-profit organizations.

BMCRC Project Sponsorship

In order to sponsor community renewal projects, BMCRC needs to establish clarity of expectation between the Council and members of the proposed project team. This application is designed to provide sufficient information, in a consistent format, for the Council to consider the project's consistency with BMCRC's vision, and its viability, before accepting responsibility of sponsoring the specific project.

BMCRC Project Planning Format

BMCRC uses a project planning logic structure adapted from the USDA North Central Regional Center for Rural Development model, *Measuring Community Success and Sustainability*. This model focuses on project outcomes rather than activities. Routine monitoring and evaluation of progress toward strategic outcomes is a primary component of this model. The Measurement Plan logic structure utilizes the following pattern:

<i>Outcome(s) Statement:</i>	
<i>Indicator(s) of Success:</i>	
<i>Measurable Benchmarks (Objectives):</i>	<i>Performance Measures (for evaluation):</i> <i>Source(s) of Measures:</i> <i>Frequency of Measures:</i>

For this model, outcomes are grounded in a vision statement from which strategic outcomes (goals) can be derived. An outcome statement describes the benefits resulting from a process or set of activities. A strategic outcome usually can be further defined with statements describing specific indicators of success, or progress, toward the outcome. A benchmark statement describes measurable essential objectives that must be achieved to attain, or progress toward, a desired outcome or specific indicator. Benchmark Performance Measures provide a way to value or count progress toward outcomes. Performance measuring is used as feedback and evaluation on progress toward the project's intended outcomes. A project Measurement Plan is less concerned with documenting activities, and is intended more to measure progress toward project goals.

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Reasons and General Dimensions for Project Measuring

To begin the process of measuring a project's progress, a community or an organization first must have established a *vision* for itself. Community visions generally are very broad, such as "economic security," "healthy natural resources" or "good quality of life." Achieving that vision usually requires a change in the way the community will look and feel to the people who live there. Community vision statements usually suggest community outcomes. BMCRC will consider the fit with its vision of any project team which applies for BMCRC sponsorship.

A *project outcome* or goal is a condition the project team wants to achieve. By measuring progress toward outcomes, the team establishes a focal point for reflection and refocusing as it adapts implementation to specific conditions of the project.

Tasks or *activities* are the steps a project team takes to obtain its outcomes. Most project teams will pursue a number of actions simultaneously that should be coordinated for effectiveness in moving the project closer to its outcomes and its vision. The process of measurement helps projects tie their actions more consciously to project outcomes and the community vision.

Activities often are confused with their outcomes. For example, if an outcome is economic security, creating jobs may be one activity to advance toward that goal. However, creating jobs may not be the only action required to achieve economic security. If project teams list activities instead of outcomes, one way to find the relationship between the action and the outcome is to ask "why" the community or project team wants to do that activity. That is, what is the condition the community wants to achieve?

An *indicator of success* or *progress* is one thing that must be changed, or a condition that must be accomplished, by the actions the project team takes in order to claim that progress has been made toward one or more outcomes. Typically, it is stated in terms of an output or *benchmark* (objective). Since outcome statements are broad, there are many possible actions and many possible indicators that can suggest progress. Different people will interpret a project's outcomes in different ways and will suggest different indicators of progress. It is important that project teams recognize, and respect, the diversity of interpretations for success for project outcomes.

A *measure* provides a way to actually count or value the status of an indicator. For example, things may be measured as "the number of," "percent of," "the occurrence of," etc. To track a measure over time, there should be:

- ☞ A *unit*, which defines the increments of the measure; ie., what is being counted, such as inches, people, hours, dollars, etc.
- ☞ A *unit of analysis*, which sets the limits on the units counted, such as "the town of Rail Road Flat," "Calaveras County" or "the Mokelumne watershed."
- ☞ A *baseline*, which defines the value of the measure at a starting point determined by the project team, such as "low-income families in May, 1999."

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What Can and Should Be Measured

Measure progress toward achieving project goals. If it was worth defining an outcome, then it's worth knowing that you are getting closer to accomplishing that goal.

Measure only those things that will provide needed information. Don't waste time and resources gathering statistics that are not relevant to your outcome(s).

Concentrate on those indicators most likely to (re)direct activities. Decide what information will be most useful in making decisions regarding implementation of the project's plan.

Where direct measurement of important factors seems impossible or prohibitive, select alternate measurements. Choose a measure that appears to come closest to providing the needed information.

Balance the need to know with the ability to find out. Attempt to measure only what the available skills and resources reasonably can be expected to measure.

Initial Measurement Checklist

To measure progress toward project goals, the project team needs a baseline that can be identified and for which information is readily collectable so the team can establish its current situation on its measures. In order to see progress made toward its goals, the team needs to know where it started. Baseline data are the initial evidence as to where the team started, so that when measures are made a second, third and fourth time, the team can see if its actions actually are moving it toward its goal.

To assist in establishing measures that will provide relevant information, we offer the following guide:

1. What is the most important indicator for this goal?
2. What is our measure relative to the goal benchmark(s)?
3. What is the baseline measure that we will use?
4. What is our unit of measure?
5. Where will we get the information we need?
6. How will we get the information we need?
7. Who will collect the information we need?
8. Will we need to pay someone to collect this information? Yes ___ No ___ If yes, how much?
9. How many hours will it take to collect this information?
10. When will the information be collected?
11. How will we measure progress from the baseline?
12. How else can we use this information to achieve our project's goals?

The remainder of this packet consists of the application form, a checklist of application components, worksheets and supplemental information to assist you in completing your application and presenting your project for BMCRC sponsorship. *We recommend that the original worksheets in this packet be copied so additional sheets will be available when needed for planning and/or revision.*

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Basic Proposal:

- The proposed project advances one or more of the goals expressed in BMCRC's vision statement.
- The proposed project has a primary leader/contact; ie., project manager, team leader or committee chairperson.

Advanced Project Planning:

- Preparation of Community Renewal Project Application Packet, which includes the following:
 - Application for Sponsorship of a Community Renewal Project (Form BMCRC-PDE001-2)
 - Project Goals, Indicators, Benchmarks and Measures worksheet(s) (Form BMCRC-PDE001-3)
 - Project Activity Schedule worksheet(s) (Form BMCRC-PDE001-4)
 - Project Resources worksheet(s) (Form BMCRC-PDE001-5)
 - Project Budget Analysis worksheet(s) (Form BMCRC-PDE001-6)
 - Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan worksheet(s) (Form BMCRC-PDE001-7)

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**Application for Sponsorship
of a
Community Renewal Project**

Submit application to:

BMCRC, PO Box 1441, West Point CA 95255

Project name: _____

Date submitted: _____

Project team contact: _____

(Please attach a list of participating volunteers)

Address: _____

For assistance with this application, contact:

Telephone: _____

E-mail address: _____

Briefly describe the proposed project: (Please type or print clearly. Use additional pages, if needed)
(It is suggested that this section be revisited after completing the worksheets)

Project Vision/Purpose: *(Why is this project being proposed, what does it do and what are the expected results?)*

Project Overview: *(What are the role and accountability expectations of the project team/committee? What is the geographic area or location affected by the project?)*

Project Analysis: *(What is the project's scope and scale? What resources does it require and how available are they? What is the worth, in dollars and/or other value measures, to project beneficiaries? In what part of the community does the project operate? Who else is pursuing similar goals, and how does this differ from what is already being done.? What are the key project risks and how will they be avoided? How will key opportunities be developed?)*

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Project Strategy: *(What is the project's primary outcome and where will it be in one year, three years, five years and/or at its end? How will it be achieved? Are other organizations or project teams participating in the project? If yes, who are they? Are permits or approvals required by other organizations or governmental agencies? If so, who are they, and what processes or procedures must be completed? What is the project's organizational structure? When will the project begin and when is it expected to end? What is the timetable (work schedule) for the project? What has been done to date?)*

Project Management and Staffing: *(Who manages this project and, briefly, what is their background? Is there any outside support [lawyer, accountant, engineer, etc.]? Who handles administration? What skill sets are needed by volunteers, consultants or employees to staff the project?)*

Project Budget and Financial Plan: *(What are the project's financial needs, expectations or projections? What are the project's expected funding sources? What, if any, match, in-kind or monetary, is required, and what are the sources? What will be done with any project equity [unrestricted revenue] created by the project? What plans are there for sustaining the project's outcomes?)*

Project Monitoring and Evaluation: *(How will the project's progress routinely be monitored? What process, measures and intervals will the project use to monitor progress? Who will conduct the monitoring? How will the project team use monitoring to adapt project management? How will success of the project be measured in the two dimensions of process and results?)*

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Community Renewal Project: _____

Project Planning Time Period: _____ to _____ *(Use additional pages as needed)*

Project Goals, Indicators, Benchmarks and Measures

Outcome Statement (Goal):

Indicator of Success #__:

Benchmark A:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark B:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark C:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark D:	Measure: Source: Frequency:

Indicator of Success #__:

Benchmark A:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark B:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark C:	Measure: Source: Frequency:
Benchmark D:	Measure: Source: Frequency:

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Project Planning Definitions

- Outcome Statement (Goal):** A statement that describes an intended result of the project.
- Indicator of Success:** A statement that describes what success looks like for some key aspect of a goal in reasonably measurable terms. *(More than one indicator often is appropriate for each goal.)*
- Benchmark:** A statement that indicates progress, in time, for each indicator of success in a manner that provides a schedule for anticipated achievements within the project.
- Measure:** A measure provides a way to actually count or place a value on the status of an indicator's benchmark. For example, a benchmark may be measured as "the number of," "the percent of," or "the quality of" ...an item.
- Source:** From what or where in the project the measure will be extracted and/or recorded.
- Frequency:** How often the measure will be extracted and recorded.

To track a measure, and the changes it reflects over time, the following are required:

- Unit:** that defines the increments of the measure, such as hours, people, inches, tons, dollars, etc.
- Unit of Analysis:** that sets the limit on the units counted, such as "the community of ...," or "the year of ..."
- Baseline:** that defines the value of the measure at a starting point established by the project manager(s).

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Community Renewal Project: _____

Planning Time Period: _____ to _____

Project Resources Worksheet

Project Resource Needs	Quantity	Type Available (In-kind, cash, volunteers, etc.)	When Needed	Responsible Person

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Project Resources

Resources include, but are not limited to:

1. Human resources
 - ☞ volunteers
 - ☞ employees
 - ☞ skills, such as labor, accounting, engineering, typing, etc.
2. Equipment
 - ☞ furniture
 - ☞ vehicles
 - ☞ computers
 - ☞ tools
 - ☞ telephones and fax machines
3. Support services
 - ☞ legal, engineering or other consultants
 - ☞ Web site development and maintenance
4. Office supplies
 - ☞ paper
 - ☞ pencils
 - ☞ postage
 - ☞ printer and fax cartridges
5. Administration
 - ☞ those indirect costs required to assure project oversight and accountability
6. Other
 - ☞ anything that doesn't fit into another category

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Community Renewal Project: _____

Planning Time Period: _____ to _____

Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan

Project outcome:

Indicator of success:				
Measurable benchmark:				
Measure	Source(s)	Frequency	Method	Responsible

Indicator of success:				
Measurable benchmark:				
Measure	Source(s)	Frequency	Method	Responsible

Indicator of success:				
Measurable benchmark:				
Measure	Source(s)	Frequency	Method	Responsible